

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A system for managing intellectual property rights in an intellectual property arising from one or more than one contract document, comprising:
 - 5 a central processing unit;
 - a display device coupled to the central processing unit;
 - one or more than one rights questionnaire posing one or more than one question pertaining to the intellectual property;
 - a first memory coupled to the central processing unit for storing a management program, the management program comprising:
 - a packaging module for packaging the one or more than one contract document and the one or more than one rights questionnaire;
 - 10 a review module for directing review of the one or more than one contract document and acquisition of acquired responses to the one or more than one question posed in the one or more than one rights questionnaire; and
 - 15 a search module to allow searching of the acquired responses;
 - a second memory coupled to the central processing unit for storing the one or more than one rights questionnaire; and
 - 20 a third memory coupled to the central processing unit for storing the acquired responses.
2. The system of claim 1, the management program further comprising an approval module for permitting one or more than one review of the acquired responses.
- 25 3. The system of claim 1 wherein the rights questionnaire comprises one or more than one document checklist, one or more than one rights summary and one or more than one copyright summary.
4. The system of claim 3 wherein the one or more than one rights summary comprises one or more than one underlying rights summary and one or more than one distribution rights summary.

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5. The system of claim 3 wherein the one or more than one copyright summary comprises one or more than one product copyright summary and one or more than one underlying work copyright summary.

6. The system of claim 1 wherein at least one rights questionnaire comprises
5 at least one question arising under a law chosen from the group consisting of copyright laws, trademark laws, and patent laws.

7. The system of claim 1, the management program further comprising a privilege access module for controlling the disclosure of the acquired responses.

8. The system of claim 1, further comprising a fourth memory coupled to the central processing unit for storing the one or more than one contract document.

9. A system for managing intellectual property rights comprising a computer readable medium containing the management program of claim 1.

10. The system of claim 1 wherein the packaging module comprises:
an initialization module for initializing the system and creating one or more than one record having information pertaining to the intellectual property;

a linkage module for linking two or more records pertaining to the intellectual property to each other;

a generation module for generating the one or more than one appropriate rights questionnaire;

a routing module for sending the one or more than one contract document and the one or more than one generated rights questionnaire to the review module; and

a hierarchical tree to represent the linkage between the records.

25 11. The system of claim 10, the linkage module further for linking one or more than one record pertaining to the intellectual property to one or more than one record pertaining to other intellectual property.

30 12. The system of claim 10 wherein the management program stores the records created by the initialization module into a first database.

13. The system of claim 10 wherein the linkage module links one or more than one record to one or more than one rights questionnaire.

14. The system of claim 10 wherein a packager operates the packaging module, a reviewer operates the reviewing module and a searcher operates the search module.

5 15. The system of claim 14 wherein the packager and searcher are the same person.

16. The system of claim 14 wherein the reviewer is an attorney within a corporate legal department.

10 17. The system of claim 14 wherein the reviewer is an attorney in an outside law firm.

18. The system of claim 10 wherein the generation module automatically generates one or more than one rights questionnaires when the initialization module creates one or more than one new record.

15 19. The system of claim 10 wherein the generation module offers a choice of rights questionnaires and generates the one or more than one rights questionnaires chosen.

20. A system for managing intellectual property rights in an intellectual property arising from one or more than one contract document, comprising:

20 means for central processing;

means for display coupled to the mean for central processing;

means for posing legal questions pertaining to the intellectual property;

means for storing a management program coupled to the means for central processing, the management program comprising:

25 means for packaging the one or more than one contract document and the legal questions;

means for reviewing the one or more than one contract document and acquiring acquired responses to the legal questions; and

means for searching the acquired responses.

30 21. A method for managing intellectual property rights in an intellectual property arising from one or more than one contract document, comprising the

steps of:

packaging the one or more than one contract document and pertinent legal questions comprising one or more than one legal question pertaining to the intellectual property;

5 directing the review of the one or more than one contract document and acquisition of acquired responses to the pertinent legal questions; and storing the acquired responses in a database to permit searching the acquired responses.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein the packaging step comprises the steps of:

initializing a management program and creating data records comprising one or more than one data record having information pertaining to the intellectual property;

generating the pertinent legal questions;

linking the data records to the pertinent legal questions;

displaying a hierarchical tree representing the linkage between the data records and the pertinent legal questions; and

routing the one or more than one contract document, the pertinent legal questions, and the data records to the review module.

20 23. The method of claim 22 wherein the generating step comprises offering choice of rights questionnaires, receiving a request for one or more than one rights questionnaire, and generating the one or more than one rights questionnaire requested.

24. The method of claim 22 wherein the generating step comprises automatically generating one or more than one rights questionnaire based upon the information in the data records.

25. The method of claim 21, further comprising, before the packaging step, preparing one or more than one rights questionnaire having one or more than one question designed to elicit critical information about ownership rights in 30 intellectual property.

26. The method of claim 21 wherein the directing step comprises sending the

one or more than one contract document to a legal source for review and receiving acquired responses to the pertinent legal questions.

27. A method for managing intellectual property rights in an intellectual property arising from one or more than one contract document, comprising the 5 steps for:

central processing and display of information pertinent to the intellectual property;

posing legal questions pertaining to the intellectual property;

storing a management program used in the central processing and display step, the management program comprising the steps for:

packaging the one or more than one contract document and the legal questions;

reviewing the one or more than one contract document and acquiring acquired responses to the legal questions; and

searching the acquired responses.

28. A method for managing ownership rights in an intellectual property arising from one or more than one contract document, comprising the steps of, under the control of a user system:

accessing a computer network;

initializing a management program and creating data records and preparing a package having one or more than one rights questionnaire and the one or more than one contract document;

routing the package for review, the rights questionnaire having one or more than one question; and

25 receiving a reviewed rights questionnaire having responses to the one or more than one question and storing the responses in a database.

29. The method of claim 28 further comprising the step of searching the responses stored in the database.

30. A signal for transmitting computer information through a computer network for causing a computer-based information handling system to perform steps for managing ownership rights in an intellectual property arising from

one or more than one contract document, the steps comprising:

packaging the one or more than one contract document and pertinent legal questions comprising one or more than one legal question pertaining to the intellectual property;

5 directing the review of the one or more than one contract document and acquisition of acquired responses to the pertinent legal questions; and storing the acquired responses in a database to permit searching the acquired responses.